

**State of Board of Health
Minutes
July 17, 2009 – 9:00 a.m.
Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23233**

Members present: Fred Hannett, Chairman; Dr. Craig Reed, Vice Chairman; Dr. Julie Beales; Scott Burnette; Barbara Favola; Dr. Charles Johnson; Dr. Bennie Marshall; Dr. Bhushan Pandya; and Ed Spearbeck.

Members absent: Jim Edmondson and David Summers.

VDH staff present: Dr. Karen Remley, State Health Commissioner; Jeff Lake, Deputy Commissioner for Community Health Services; Joan Martin, Deputy Commissioner for Administration; Joe Hilbert, Executive Advisor; Martha Pulley, Policy Advisor; Catherine West, Administrative Assistant; Phil Giamita, Director of Communications; Chris Durrer, Director, Office of Licensure and Certification; Erik Bodin, Director of the Division of Certificate of Public Need; Dr. Michael Royster, Director, Office of Minority Health and Public Health Policy; Dr. Wes Kleene, Director, Office of Drinking Water.

Others Present: Robin Kurz and Karri Atwood, Attorney General's Office. Steve Harrison and Lisa Hague, guests of the Commissioner.

Call to Order

Mr. Hannett convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 13, 2009 Board meeting were approved unanimously.

A discussion took place about the advantages and disadvantage of recording Board of Health meetings. No further action was taken regarding the issue.

Matrix of Pending Regulatory Actions

Joe Hilbert reviewed the listing of all of the pending VDH regulatory actions. There were no questions.

Commissioner's Report

Dr. Remley introduced Steve Harrison and Lisa Hague, from the VDH Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs. Dr. Remley invited them to attend the meeting and meet the Board in recognition of the superior level of service that they have provided to the agency.

Dr. Remley gave an update on H1N1. She explained the five pillars (i.e., surveillance, vaccination, mitigation, communication and direct clinical care) which are being used for H1N1 planning and presented her report.

A question was brought up regarding Public Inquiry Center. The Public Inquiry Center was not functioning, but the plan is to have it operational by mid-August. Dr. Remley emphasized that the Public Inquiry Center is central for sharing information with the public and for helping local health departments. Many states do not have a similar system in place, but Virginia will.

There was a discussion concerning children's and other hospitals and whether they would have sufficient staff to handle the H1N1 response. Dr. Remley said that this is a problem that needs to be addressed at the community level.

Mr. Burnette mentioned a blog he received urging people not to get vaccinated. Dr. Remley acknowledged that convincing people to get vaccinated is going to be a challenge. She discussed the importance of vaccination and education of young parents about vaccine preventable diseases. Dr. Remley reminded the Board that H1N1 is a novel virus that could mutate.

Seasonal flu and H1N1 flu vaccination availability was also discussed. Vaccines will be allocated to states; the number of vaccines allocated will be based on population distribution by state. VDH's priorities for early vaccination include health care workers, persons under 24 years of age, and primary contacts of children under six months of age. VDH hopes to be able to convince physicians to pre-enroll in Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS). This plan is still under development. VDH also hopes that big-box stores such as WalMart will become involved in H1N1 vaccinations to alleviate the load of local health departments which are short-staffed.

It was announced that Virginia, Maryland, and Washington DC health officials will meet on August 1st with their governors to develop an agreement to share vaccines. The three state health officials also pledged at the National H1N1 Summit to give each other 1.5 hours advanced notice before making any significant decisions.

It was mentioned that Dr. Remley established an Infectious Disease Advisory Group, making Virginia the only state to have such a group.

H1N1 implications on international travel were also discussed.

Federal Economic Stimulus Update

This was provided by Joe Hilbert.

A question was asked whether all of our funding was from formula-driven grants or if any of the grants we are applying for are truly competitive in nature. Mr. Hilbert mentioned the Office of Chief Medical Examiner's competitive grant application.

Commissioner's Infant Mortality Prevention Initiative

Dr. Remley delivered the presentation.

There was a brief discussion about babies no longer being delivered on weekends and about the Text4Baby initiative

Dr. Remley also talked about:

- Working with the AARP on its National Grandmothers Campaign
- Developing a multivitamins with folic acid counseling and distribution program.
- Working with obstetricians/gynecologists to help them enroll their patients in WIC
- Working with large volume hospitals to involve WIC nutritionists as part of the hospital care management team
- Developing a Public Health for Pediatrics pilot program
- Working with WalMart in Hampton to develop a Train the Trainer program concerning infant mortality prevention
- Developing a program to inform the incoming Governor's Administration and other state leaders about Healthy People 2020.

There was a discussion about the Centering Pregnancy Model of prenatal care. Currently, the March of Dimes is funding 4-5 such projects around the state, but the health insurance industry does not recognize this model and therefore does not reimburse for it.

Public Comment

Karen Cameron, Executive Director of the Central Virginia Health Planning Agency, spoke during the public comment period. She also provided copies of her agency's 2008 Annual Report to the Board members.

Ms. Cameron stated that Regional Health Planning Agencies play a vital role, but that there is not sufficient state financial support. As a result, one agency has suspended operations, and another will likely cease its operation in a few weeks without additional financial support. She asked for the Board's assistance in this matter.

There was a discussion regarding this issue and the consequences of lack of funding.

Waterworks Regulations – Chronically Non-Compliant Waterworks (12 VAC 5-590) (Proposed Regulations)

Dr. Wes Kleene, Director of the Office of Drinking Water presented the proposed regulations.

There was a discussion about chronically non-compliant waterworks and VDH's authority over them. It was pointed out that less than 25 out of 3,000 tested public waterworks are considered chronically non-compliant, that Virginia is one of the top states in terms of quality of drinking water according to EPA, and that VDH has particular challenges with small systems (representing approximately 90 percent of all public water supplies in the state) that serve approximately 10% of Virginia's population.

The proposed regulation was unanimously approved.

Certificate of Public Need Regulations (12 VAC 5-220) (Non-Discretionary Amendments)

Chris Durrer, Director of the Office of Licensure and Certification presented two amendments for these regulations.

The proposed amendments were unanimously approved.

Member Reports

Barbara Favola – Local Government

The Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) has an intense interest in issues regarding on-site sewage systems.

Dr. Charles Johnson – Virginia Dental Association

Dr. Johnson was involved in the dedication of the new VCU dental building. The Mission of Mercy (MOM) program took place in Wise County on July 24-25.

Dr. Bennie Marshall – Virginia Nurses Association

VNA is very interested in health care reform. The state of the economy is hindering the hiring of nurses. Dr. Marshall talked about expanding the role of nurse practitioners.

Dr. Bhushan Pandya – Medical Society of Virginia

Dr. Pandya expressed concern about proposed reductions in Medicare reimbursement in the federal health care reform. Dr. Pandya also discussed health information technology.

Dr. Craig Reed – Virginia Veterinary Medical Association

Dr. Reed talked about issues pertaining to influenza.

Ed Spearbeck – Virginia Pharmacists Association

Mr. Spearbeck expressed that he is somewhat skeptical about unintended consequences of health information technology.

Fred Hannett – Corporate Purchaser of Health Care

Mr. Hannett discussed health care reform. He stated that Health Information Technology is not a panacea and that we need to move away from the transaction payment system to a payment system that is based on outcomes and quality.

Scott Burnette – Hospital Industry

The hospital industry is keenly following the health care reform developments. The Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association will be meeting with the member of Congress regarding this issue. Mr. Burnette talked about issues affecting hospitals nationwide, such as proposed funding cuts and a chronic shortage of certain pharmaceuticals.

Julie Beales – Medical Society of Virginia

She discussed her work with Area Agencies on Aging around the concept of Patient Directed Care.

Lunch Presentation

Senator Ralph Northam

Senator Northam talked about the end of life care and a potential for health care savings. Currently, the federal government spends \$500 billion on Medicare, 25 percent of which is spent on care provided during the last few weeks of life in ICU. He would like to expand community health centers to provide preventive care and education to patients, and to reduce the number of people who utilize Emergency Departments unnecessarily. He also wants to promote the use and development of electronic medical records.

A discussion ensued regarding health care reform and its impact on Virginia. Considering that the national health care debate is in its early stages, Senator Northam was not sure that there is not much Virginia can do to prepare for health care reform at this time.

Other Business

Proposed dates for Board of Health meetings in 2010 were discussed. A question was raised about the April meeting and when Easter will occur for 2010. Joe Hilbert will send an email to the Board members with proposed dates so that a schedule can be voted on at the October 2009 meeting.

An orientation for new Board members will be scheduled sometime during the summer. All Board members will be invited to attend.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.